

# The Facts About Clinical Trials

A [clinical trial](#) is the only scientific way to assess the safety and effectiveness of new treatments or interventions.

All patients on clinical trials are volunteers and have given their consent freely as part of an [informed decision](#).

The information gained from clinical trials is required in order to approve the use of treatments and interventions, including those used in cancer.

Successful clinical trials lead to new and improved treatments and innovations in cancer care.

Clinical trials are not only for complex drugs or therapies; they are conducted for all treatments, even ones that may seem fairly simple, such as over-the-counter medications.

Results from clinical trials have:

- Improved cancer screening and early detection strategies
- Led to more effective treatments with fewer side effects
- Provided better supportive care

Cancer clinical trials advance our knowledge on how to:

- Better treat cancer by testing new drugs
- Use older drugs in new ways
- Develop new approaches to radiation or surgery
- Use new combinations of treatments

Knowledge from clinical trials adds to the progress being made in fighting cancer by:

- Answering important scientific questions. A clinical trial is the final step in a process which often starts in the laboratory
- Discovering what works and what doesn't work in people
- Determining the best dose of new treatments and if a new treatment is safe and effective
- Determining, through comparison to the current standard of care, if a new treatment is more effective
- Guiding the direction of future research from the results of earlier trials
- Sharing the information gathered from clinical trials with our partners in cancer care worldwide. In many cases, this has led to new standards of care